/The Kirghiz/

563 262 [484] When a Kirghiz travels, he brings along a few balls of qurut and supplements them with wild rhubarb and celery which he finds on the mountainsides.

[735] Bread is made in solid lumps leavened with sour milk. The poor cannot afford bread. They eat large quantities of mash. Meat is a luxury. A sheep is killed only on an important occasion, but when the hunter is successful his family enjoys game meat.

c. Clothing

563 291 The people dress in keeping with the severity of the climate. Men wear long coats padded with cotton-wool. Trousers are also padded, and tucked into the leather knee-boots. Fur caps are pulled down over the ears to protect them from the bitter cold. Leather slippers are worn inside the boots, and the boots are removed when one enters the tent.

Women's dress is similar to that of the men, except for the headgear. The women's headdress is a large turban of muslin or similar cloth, nine to twelve inches high and of corresponding thickness. For dress, men wear embroidered skullcaps surmounted by sheepskin hoods lined with wool. They also sometimes wear a conical hat with two slits at the bottom to allow the brim to turn up.

3. Custom

563 583 562 Girls are at a premium in Kirghiz society, and the father of a would-be bridegroom has to pay a handsome price for the bride in money or its equivalent in livestock (thirty to three hundred sheep and two to thirty camels). Parents betroth their

563 584 583 son when he reaches the age of six or seven, to some neighbor's daughter of about the same age. A bride price is then settled by women relatives of both families. The boy's father pays a first annual installment, and the girl's father gives the boy a shirt or coat as a token of the betrothal. Then the marriage contract is complete. If for any reason the contract is broken, the installments paid are refunded. When the agreed amount has been

563 585 [582] paid in full and the bride and groom have reached the proper age (fourteen for girls, sixteen for boys), the boy's parents invite all the neighbors to a feast and announce the marriage. The bride and groom do not attend the feast, but remain in their tents all day. There is no ceremony. The feast and announcement, known as the Nikah, constitute the wedding.

563 585 591 The bridegroom is not yet allowed to take his bride away from her home. She continues to live with her parents for two to five months, during which time her parents make and furnish a tent (aq-ai) for them. Meanwhile the boy remains at home, if it is nearby, or in a tent lent him by the girl's parents. He may

[606] go every seven or ten days and stay with the girl in her tent, but the visits must be kept secret from her father. If he appears before his father-in-law, it must be as a stranger.